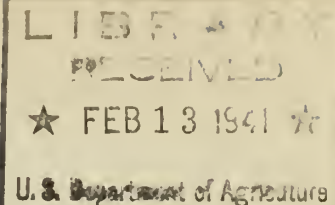


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The Fat's on the Table

A broadcast by Miss Ruth Van Deman, Bureau of Home Economics, and Mr. Wallace Kadderly, Office of Information, broadcast Tuesday February 4, 1941, in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour by the National Broadcasting Company and a network of 87 associate radio stations.

--ooOoo--

WALLACE KADDERLY:

Again we're calling on Ruth Van Deman for news from the Bureau of Home Economics. Ruth, you told me the news this time on fats and oils--the fats we eat, and cook with, and use on the table.

RUTH VAN DEMAN:

Yes, sir, the fat's on the table.

KADDERLY:

Just so it doesn't get into the fire.

VAN DEMAN:

We'll try not to let that happen. As my guide, philosopher, and handy reference, I brought along our new leaflet on fats and oils.

KADDERLY:

I hope it has the answer to my question.

VAN DEMAN:

That depends on what your question is-----

KADDERLY:

I should say to my several questions--In these days of manufactured, refined, fabricated products, fats aren't the simple foods they used to be, when every family rendered its own lard in its own iron kettle.

VAN DEMAN:

And churned its own butter in its big stone churn. I know. As a youngster that was my job on Saturday mornings, to lift that wooden dasher up and down till the butter began to "come". Wallace, I hope you aren't going to ask me to sigh for "the good old days."

KADDERLY:

Well, Ruth there are some things about the "good old days" that we might well sigh for. However, we're talking about food---and certainly in these nowadays we know more about what's in food.

VAN DEMAN:

Take that butter we made from the cream of our own Jersey cow. Nobody then had even the remotest notion that the deep yellow color the butter had in summer indicated richness in vitamin A.

(over)

KADDERLY:

Which came from the carotene in the green grass when the cow was turned out to pasture.

VAN DEMAN:

Or that the sun shining on her back as she browsed and chewed her cud, helped to put vitamin D into the milk fat.

KADDERLY:

And today we have the artificial sun lamp that can irradiate dry feed so a cow can get her vitamin D that way in winter time, when she has to stay in the barn---and is not exposed to sunlight.

VAN DEMAN:

Well now when it comes to putting vitamins into food scientifically, that's often done directly into the food itself. Many of the margarines made from vegetable oils are fortified with vitamin concentrates.

KADDERLY:

I suppose anybody who wants to buy one of these fortified margarines can tell from the label on the package which product has what vitamins.

VAN DEMAN:

That's right. When manufacturers know the vitamin content of their product they're generally proud to state the number of units of A, or D, or whatever, on the label.

But Wallace, you said a moment ago you had lots of questions about fats and oils.

KADDERLY:

I do have. For one thing, I'd like to understand more about what's meant by the digestibility of different fats. I read statements about that every now and then.

VAN DEMAN:

Oh my. Now I am in a hot spot.

KADDERLY:

How so?

VAN DEMAN:

The results of digestion experiments on fats have been so often misunderstood and given a meaning the scientists never intended.

So far as we know all the scientific studies on the digestibility of fats are from the angle of finding out how long it takes a normal healthy person to digest a fat, or how completely he digests it.

KADDERLY:

The rate and the completeness of digestion, that would be.

VAN DEMAN:

Precisely. And the scientists have worked out certain definite measures for that.---certain figures they call coefficients of digestibility. But whether a person digests a fat easily and without feeling any discomfort, is something else again. There's no way to measure a person's feelings in terms of percentage.

KADDERLY:

Too much of the personal element mixed up with it.

VAN DEMAN:

Exactly. So when you see statements about one fat being more digestible than another, just remember it's on the basis of how completely those fats were digested by the people who took part in the experiments.

Some years ago the Department of Agriculture studied the digestibility of practically all the fats we use for food. On the basis of completeness of digestion they found there was very little difference in the fats we ordinarily eat. Does that answer your question?

KADDERLY:

It does---when added to what you said last week about fats being rather slow to digest and giving meals their staying quality. I suppose that's the reason fats play such a important part in the food problem in countries where people are on rations,---as they are now in so many places in Europe.

VAN DEMAN:

One reason yes. Another is that fats as we eat them are such a concentrated form of energy --- anywhere from about 3,000 to 4,000 calories to the pound.

KADDERLY:

Then some fats are not as fattening as others.

VAN DEMAN:

I wouldn't put it just that way. You don't make a meal just off of fats. You also get calories from the sugar, and starch, and protein in the rest of the food.

KADDERLY:

I understand. It's the total calories that count.

VAN DEMAN:

And another point, the nearer fat a fat is, the higher the calories.

KADDERLY:

What do you mean by "nearer"?

VAN DEMAN:

The nearer 100 per cent fat. Lard and the vegetable oils and compounds we use so much for cooking are practically all fat. There's not even any salt in them.

But some of the table fats---butter and margarine, for instance, may be only about four-fifths fat.

KADDERLY:

Butter wouldn't be butter, wouldn't look and taste the way it does, if there weren't some traces of the buttermilk still in it.

VAN DEMAN:

And you know how the water in it sometimes shows on the surface in little beads of moisture. Well, that difference between a fat with quite a bit of moisture in it, and a fat that's all fat can cause a cake maker grief if she doesn't know how to allow for it. If the recipe she is using calls for butter or margarine, and she uses just the same quantity of lard or some other 100% fat, the cake may turn out a dismal disappointment.

KADDERLY:

Haven't the scientific cooks worked out some rule to get around that--- some rule for substituting one kind of fat for another?

VAN DEMAN:

Several rules, yes. The figures are a little complicated to remember. They go into fractions of a cup and numbers of tablespoons. They're all written out in the new leaflet on Fats and Oils.

KADDERLY:

Good. I never believe in making my head carry figures that I can read in a bulletin.

VAN DEMAN:

Provided you have the bulletin when you want to read the figures.

KADDERLY:

That is a point, of course. What about this new leaflet? "Fats and Oils"-- is that the title?

VAN DEMAN:

"Fats and Oils for Cooking and Table Use".

KADDERLY:

Is it available to our Farm and Home friends to add to their libraries of reference material on foods?

VAN DEMAN:

Absolutely --- free for the asking,---as long as the supply lasts. This is your library copy. And I hope it has the answers to all the other questions you didn't have a chance to ask today.

KADDERLY:

From the sample you've given us, I'm sure it has. Anyway as you said, Ruth, the fat's on the table, and maybe we'll have a chance to talk about it another day. Fats and oils are a pretty important item in the family food budget. I see here by the very first sentence in this leaflet: "American families spend 8 to 18 per cent of their food money for fats and oils."

VAN DEMAN:

Yes, out of a ten-dollar-a-week budget that would be anywhere from 80 cents to a dollar eighty.

KADDERLY:

WELL, Farm and Home friends, (ad lib offer of bulletin)

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